

Message Text

PAGE 01 NATO 01740 261648Z
ACTION AF-04

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S E C R E T USNATO 1740

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, AO, CG
SUBJECT: ATTACK ON SHABA: HARIB CONSULTATION WITH THE BELGIANS

REF: STATE 67079

SUMMARY: UNDERSECRETARY HABIB CONFERRED IN DEPTH ON ZAIRE WITH MFA DIRECTOR OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS VANDEN BLOOCK. THEY AGREED THAT THE SHABA INCURSION WAS NOW BEYOND DOUBT A SERIOUS EFFORT, SUPPORTED BY ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT AND AT LEAST TOLERATED BY SOVIET UNION, TO UNDERMINE OR DESTROY THE MOBUTU GOVERNMENT. THEY AGREED THAT BOTH US AND BELGIUM SHOULD INTENSIFY THEIR EFFORTS TO: (1) PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF ZAIRE AND THE MOBUTU GOVERNMENT; (2) OBTAIN HARD INFORMATION ON SHABA DEVELOPMENTS; (3) STIMULATE MOBUTU TO BOTH DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY ACTIVITY; (4) PROVIDE HIM ADDITIONAL MATERIAL ASSISTANCE WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE POLITICAL POSSIBILITIES. VANDEN BLOOCK SAID GOB WOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL MUNITIONS TO ZAIRE, PROVIDED THE NEED WAS DEMONSTRATED AND EVIDENCE WAS AT HAND IT WOULD BE PUT TO GOOD USE.

SECRET

PAGE 02 NATO 01740 261648Z

END SUMMARY.

1. UNDER SECRETARY HABIB MET WITH BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR GENERAL VANDEN BLOOCK MARCH 26 AND EXCHANGED INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENTS ON CURRENT SITUATION IN ZAIRE. VANDEN BLOOCK SAID BELGIUM NOW SHARED OUR OVERALL VIEW OF THE INCURSION INTO SHABA: THAT IT WAS A GENERAL EFFORT, WITH ANGOLAN BACKING AND SOVIET ENCOURAGEMENT (OR A LEAST ACQUIESCENCE) AIMED ULTIMATELY AT BRINGING DOWN THE MOBUTU GOVERNMENT. VANDEN BLOOCK ALSO

AGREED WITH HABIB THAT BELGIUM, FRANCE AND US HAD A COMMON INTEREST IN PREVENTING DISMEMBERMENT OF ZAIRE OR OF LETTING THE COUNTRY FALL INTO THE HANDS OF RADICAL, ANTI-WESTERN ELEMENTS. IT WAS AGREED TO SEEK IMPROVED EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND COOPERATION AMONG US, GOB AND FRANCE RE ZAIRE.

2. AS TO SPECIFICS, THE CONSULTATION WITH THE BELGIANS HIGHLIGHTED THE PAUCITY OF RELIABLE INFORMATION ON THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND IN SHABA. HABIB SAID THE US HAD TAKEN STEPS TO IMPROVE ITS INFORMATION GATHERING. HE URGED THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF BELGIUM'S LONG-STANDING PRESENCE IN THE CONGO TO ACQUIRE RELIABLE INFORMATION. VANDEN BLOOCK UNDERTOOK TO MAKE SUCH AN EFFORT. HABIB EMPHASIZED THAT MOBUTU TO DATE HAS FAILED TO MANIFEST POLITICAL LEADERSHIP OR THE WILL TO ACT DECISIVELY TO SAVE HIMSELF AND HIS GOVERNMENT. HABIB BROUGHT BELGIANS UP TO DATE ON NIGERIAN MEDIATION EFFORT BUT EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT ANGOLANS MIGHT HAVE LITTLE REASON TO WITHDRAW SUPPORT OF THE SHABA INCURSION UNLESS THE FAZ WERE ABLE TO SHOW SOME ABILITY TO RESIST THE INVADERS' ADVANCE.

3. VANDEN BLOOCK SPELLED OUT POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGN OF PROVIDING FURTHER MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE BUT AGREED "IN PRINCIPLE" THAT
SECRET

PAGE 03 NATO 01740 261648Z

BELGIUM COULD PROVIDE FURTHER MILITARY ASSISTANCE "ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS" IF THERE WERE NEW INFORMATION AND SOUND ANALYSIS AVAILABLE THAT INDICATES SUCH ASSISTANCE WOULD BE USEFUL. HE SAID LICENSING OF MUNITIONS FOR EXPORT TO AN AREA OF CONFLICT CONSTITUTED A POLITICAL PROBLEM FOR THE GOB WHICH, HOWEVER, COULD BE HANDLED IF NECESSARY. HE SAID FLATLY THAT THERE WAS NO CHANCE THAT BELGIAN MILITARY PERSONNEL COULD BE ASSIGNED AS FIELD ADVISERS TO THE FAZ. STRAUSS-HUPE

NOTE BY OC/T: DISTRIBUTION COORDINATED WITH MR STEINER S/S-O.

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